

January 27, 1956

Mr. Sig Mickelson
Vice-President in Charge of News and Public Affairs
Columbia Broadcasting System
485 Madison Avenue
New York 22, New York

Dear Mr. Mickelson:

For the eleventh time since 1908 the Washington and Lee University student body will conduct a two-day Mock Convention here on April 30-May 1, in which they will nominate a Democratic candidate for the United States Presidency, hoping that the Mock Convention choice will be confirmed later by the Democratic National Convention in its Chicago midsummer balloting. In the past ten Mock Conventions, Washington and Lee students have correctly pre-guessed the candidate for the party out of power six times.

Because every effort is made to lend authenticity to the nominating and balloting procedure of the Mock Convention, the event has come to be closely watched by members of both parties and the nation's press. Student delegations, representing every state and every territory, vote not according to their own preferences, but as they are instructed by party political chiefs in their respective states. The result has been often an accurate prediction of the course the balloting will follow at the bona fide National Convention. The conventions in 1948 and 1952, for this reason, were given wide coverage by the nation's press, radio and television media.

I invite your attention to the enclosed folder which gives a brief description of the convention and its history and a selection of photographs taken during the 1952 affair and its pre-convention parade. As you can see, Washington and Lee students and Lexington townspeople enter into the spirit of the convention with the greatest enthusiasm.

Keynoting each convention is a speech by a leading spokesman of the party out of power. Although this year's keynoter has not been announced, it is known that he will be one of the "elder statesmen" of the Democratic Party. The National Committees of both parties have used the Mock Convention keynote speech as the sounding board for a major political address.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend to CBS-Radio and TV an invitation to attend the 1956 Mock Convention. Adequate facilities for press, radio, and TV coverage will be provided and a competent staff of student assistants will be on hand to attend to visiting newsmen's every need. As you may remember, scenes of the 1952 convention were featured on Mr. Murray's "See It Now" program and I believe were well received.

I hope you will be interested, and I shall be happy to provide you with any additional information which you may desire. The convention promises to be colorful and exciting, but more than that, it should be newsworthy and the results should prove significant.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Frank A. Parsons
Director of Publicity

FAF/hgg